Call to Order:

President David Gushee opened the meeting at 3 p.m. He greeted all and especially welcomed our new board members. He explained the roles, functions, and responsibilities of the Board members. A more detailed Board orientation for new members will take place at the Board meeting in February. He also reminded the Board of the Annual Business Meeting on Sunday morning and encouraged all to attend to insure a quorum. He then called for a vote on two motions.

Motion 1:
To approve minutes of the 2017 Annual Business Meeting. Passed unanimously.

Motion 2:
To approve Guidelines for Evaluating Digital Scholarship document as amended. Passed unanimously.

President Gushee noted that although we had planned at the September Board meeting to also approve a revised Statement on Tenure and Promotion, after consulting with members of some of the status committees, all agreed that a wider vetting of this important document
should take place and that we should withhold approval. Further, Rachel Toombs pointed out that the statement introduces the notion of the dissertation, taking the topic from scholarship to hiring and training; President-elect Laurie Patton thinks this could serve as a way to pivot point allowing us to add the second piece on hiring for a deep look at the criteria around it. Kerry Danner reminded us that such a deep look would recognize contingent faculty in this process, also.

After a robust discussion, the Board agreed that Laurie Patton and Alice Hunt will work with Ted Vial, Publishing Task Force Chair, Kimberly Connor, task force and board member, Sarah Levine, staff expert, and Zayn Kassam, incoming Status Committee director to establish a better model for a more inclusive process and a more potent final statement to support our membership. David acknowledged and all assented that taking care before issuing a final document is important because this document—like the Guidelines for Evaluating Digital Scholarship and the Professional Conduct Statement—will demonstrate that the AAR leads learned societies in humanities fields in providing this valuable content to our membership. Zayn Kassam suggested we send the document out to Religious Studies programs and chairs and Laurie Patton followed with the same suggestion for the statement on Professional Conduct.

**President Laurie Patton’s priorities for 2019:** Laurie Patton’s theme will be: Scholarly Workers in Public Spaces, derived from her forthcoming book from University of Chicago Press on religions in the public sphere(s), a concept she hopes to expand more broadly in order to be inclusive of unrecognized publics. She wants to explore through plenaries and sessions at the 2019 Annual Meeting how we create these kinds of spaces in the classroom. She gave examples of this kind of work that could be included, such as the Common Ground Initiative, and invited us to consider other examples of individuals embodying this concept and redefining public spaces.
Laurie identified 5 initial tasks before her: 1. Continue to revise the statement on publication and scholarship in collaboration with colleagues; 2. Redo procedures on harassment and discrimination, with a view to matching and succeeding best practices in the academy; 3. Officially state that the AAR will no longer use the idea/term of *alt-ac* and will not use the term *alternative career*. Rather the AAR will recognize all the ways people work in Religious Studies; 4. Help Alice with PUR initiatives—choose top three priorities and focus on what can get advanced with success. Laurie Patton will ask the PUR chair to come to the Board meeting in February. 5. Focus on 365/24-7 organization and consider what early moves we could make to support Alice on this effort. Here too, choose top three priorities and focus on what can get advanced with success.

**Executive Director Alice Hunt’s comments:** Alice Hunt described the tedious HR process of developing an MOU with Emory as the AAR staff’s official affiliate. She also set forth how she would work to align the mission with the strategic plan and out of that develop an effective organizational chart. She stated her highest priority is working on procedures for sexual harassment complaints. Although the AAR is not required to be Title IX compliant, the organization wants to maintain highest standards. She noted that all ACLS’s are having trouble in negotiating this terrain. Current AAR practices, as President Gushee pointed out, where the organization serves as both investigators and adjudicators, is inappropriate and must change. It places too much pressure on subcommittees to act or resolve a matter and bestows too much power with AAR leadership. Rachel Toombs shared that, based on her conversations with graduate students, many incidents go unreported because the victims are not confident the process will protect them.

The final issue Alice raised were new membership categories that she asked us to consider and get back to her with our opinion before the end of the annual meeting. She also recalled the new DOE guidelines regarding trans students and processes for sexual harassment complaints on campus.
and suggested the AAR develop a statement on these new policies that impact our membership.

President Gushee concluded the meeting by encouraging us to take possession of our Board roles and to get to know the whole of the AAR. He asked us to reflect where a board presence might be meaningful and how we can best deploy our personal talents and organizational roles.

He concluded with his reflection on the honor of serving. Laurie Patton recognized him as an inspiring and prophetic leader and the entire Board stood and applauded.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Rae Connor
Secretary